

Wisconsin Foundations of English Language Arts

The Common Core State Standards break English Language Arts into four distinct areas: Reading, Writing, Speaking/Listening, and Language. In addition, Wisconsin has some broad foundations of English language arts to consider. They are:

- **English language arts is an integrated discipline;**
 - Though the standards are separated into sections, the processes of reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing and representing happen in a connected way, and are intended to be taught as such, in rich and authentic learning contexts. (CCSS, p.4)
- **English language arts instruction builds an understanding of the human experience;**
 - The discipline of English language arts celebrates the richness and complexity of literature, drama, speech and language while providing a window to the human experience. Through rigorous textual analysis and text creation, students grapple with moral, philosophical and aesthetic facets of humanity, which inform, persuade and narrate our lives and help us understand the experiences of others. These understandings ensure students graduate not only ready for college and career, but also ready to be thinking and feeling world citizens.
- **Literacy is an evolving concept, and becoming literate is a lifelong learning process;**
 - As society and technology change, so does literacy. Literacy evolves as widening perspectives change the way we read, write, speak, listen, view and represent. Students begin the process of becoming literate long before entering the classroom, and continue this process in every classroom throughout their formal schooling, and long after formal schooling is completed. Literacy attainment, and especially early literacy attainment, is strengthened by responsive learning environments that include research-based core programs, strong intervention systems, and multiple ways of monitoring what learners know and are able to do. Knowing this, all educators must see themselves as both literacy teachers and literacy learners. (CCSS, p.4)
- **Critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity are aspects of effective English education and attributes of Wisconsin graduates;**
 - Wisconsin's commitment to ensuring that 21st century skills are embedded aspects of English language arts is ongoing. This skill development strengthens English instruction, and student mastery of these skills is important to Wisconsin's conception of college and career readiness, and to ensuring students access the discipline of English language arts in rich and meaningful ways. (CCSS, p. 7)
- **Literacy, language and meaning are socially constructed and are enhanced by multiple perspectives.**
 - A rich diversity of texts, language uses, viewpoints and critical discussions are important for building knowledge in Wisconsin English classrooms. Exposure to different genres and text types, and access to multiple and global perspectives provide a venue to explore and analyze the world. (CCSS, p. 7)

Major Shifts in English Language Arts: The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts as compared to the 1998 Wisconsin Model Academic Standards

The following chart provides Wisconsin educators with a broad understanding of the major shifts in the field of English language arts now that the state has adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as Wisconsin's standards. In each section of the CCSS (Reading, Writing, Speaking/Listening, and Language) and accompanying appendices, there are general changes in the overall approach to the discipline articulated below, and within each grade band (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12) there are more specific changes to note. The specific grade-band changes are detailed in the subsequent document.

This document does not seek to formally “align” the 1998 standards with the CCSS, nor does it call out every single change. Instead, these shifts provide educators with a beginning point for critical conversation about the impact of the CCSS on curriculum, instruction and assessment and are intended to be used alongside the CCSS and the accompanying appendix documents.

General READING shifts <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Informational text must be studied in addition to literature.2. Foundational reading skills are more specifically defined K-5.3. Text complexity is more specifically defined to ensure consistency and rigor.4. Technology is viewed as more than a tool; it changes reading and reading instruction.	General SPEAKING and LISTENING shifts <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Discussion is viewed as a key component of learning and building shared knowledge.2. Speaking and listening are viewed as embedded aspects of every English Language Arts classroom.3. Technology is viewed as more than a tool; it changes the way speaking and listening occurs.
General WRITING shifts <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Narrative, informative/explanatory and opinion writing are emphasized.2. Writing exemplars are included to ensure consistent rigorous expectations for student writing.3. Research and inquiry are emphasized as processes rather than a text type.4. Technology is viewed as more than a tool; it changes writing and writing instruction.	General LANGUAGE shifts <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Punctuation and grammar instruction must occur in embedded and authentic contexts.2. Vocabulary instruction must be intentional and occur in authentic contexts.